

companies didn't want to do it. They did. They wanted to invest in America. An environmental group went to block it and got a court to go along with them. The normal practice is the administration stands up for America and American policy and objects, and the Biden administration refused to challenge it in the courts because they didn't want the lease sale to go forward. And the lease sale did not go forward. That is why no one bid on it, because there was no lease sale.

We fix that with these pieces of legislation we would like to bring to the floor, but we will continue this discussion. Hopefully, we can resolve it. We will continue pushing for it.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

TRANSFORMING STUDENT DEBT

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to reintroduce our Transforming Student Debt to Home Equity Act.

Home ownership is a key that opens the door to the middle class for tens of millions of Americans. But today, too many young workers and their families are weighed down by student loan debt that keeps this dream out of their reach.

The Transforming Student Debt to Home Equity Act would create a pilot program to test various approaches that combine student loan payments and mortgage payments into one monthly bill. It would empower hard-working Americans that are current on student loan repayments to actually combine their loan costs, allowing them to build home equity.

The purpose of this act is to move forward with those pilot projects, and with millions of vacant homes around our country, this legislation would spur neighborhood revitalization and improve our quality of life.

The promises of the American Dream should be available to all, so let us lift up and invest in new means to help the next generation and invest in middle-class workers and families that build up our Nation by investing in it.

REALLOCATING EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE

(Mr. HILL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HILL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to the attack on families in rural America by the Biden administration in their reallocation of Emergency Rental Assistance funds.

As of March 31, unspent ERA funds from rural States, like my home State of Arkansas, are being taken and given to a handful of blue States, like New York, California, and New Jersey, who

have already received and spent their own share of Emergency Rental Assistance funds.

As the Treasury claws back this money, this reallocation of funds will disproportionately affect rural America. The reallocation of ERA money is unfair and turns a blind eye to the needs of renters who have not received rental assistance simply because they live in rural areas of our country.

To stand up for rural Arkansans and Americans across the country, I have introduced the Protecting Rural Renters Act, which will prohibit the ERA funds originally promised to our rural areas from being reallocated elsewhere.

This act would simply remove the State allocations from the statutory claw-backs and effectively prevent these funds from being taken away from our rural citizens. This is in the best interests of our Nation.

AFFIRMATIVE STEPS TOWARD CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

(Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Madam Speaker, as the conversation around the country centers on the legalization of marijuana, we must simultaneously address the criminal and racial justice issues embedded in this conversation.

Despite cannabis usage rates between White and non-Whites being similar, Black Americans are arrested for cannabis offenses at a rate of nearly four to one compared to Whites.

For decades, the war on drugs has been a tool to target Black and Brown Americans. As a result, their life trajectories have been impacted negatively.

The MORE Act would create a Community Reinvestment Grant Program, which would provide funding for communities negatively impacted by the war on drugs. These grants would be used for the development of expungement processes, employment programs, and substance use disorder treatment. These reinvestments are imperative for our communities and our country.

I am proud that I voted to pass the MORE Act today as an affirmative step toward the criminal justice reform.

NOT AN INNOCENT APRIL FOOLS' DAY PRANK

(Mr. PALAZZO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PALAZZO. Madam Speaker, last year I introduced H.R. 6176, with the goal of preventing the Secretary of Energy and the President from doing exactly what they announced this week, tapping the Strategic Petroleum Reserve without issuing a plan for American energy independence.

Now, several months after living under President Biden's failed energy policies and decisions, he has announced the largest release of oil reserves in history, putting one million additional barrels on the market per day on average every day for the next 6 months.

Biden's anti-American energy agenda jeopardizes our national security once again.

Tapping the SPR at the levels announced this week by this administration is a dangerous move. Drawing down our strategic reserves by over 25 percent poses a huge national security risk, a risk that America would not be in the place to take if Biden would end the Federal freeze on all new oil and gas projects and stop the regulatory assault on U.S. energy development and financing. Tapping the SPR will not lower gas prices.

Today is April Fools' Day, but with Biden in office you would think every day is April Fools' Day. However, he is not pulling innocent pranks on the American people, but he is personally harming the safety, security, and prosperity of America.

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, there is so much going on these days, so much to comment on. At this time, I yield to the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS), my friend, whenever she is ready.

KEVIN MCKEE IS AN INCREDIBLE ATHLETE

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. GOHMERT for yielding to me.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the accomplishments of an incredible athlete from Iowa's Second District.

Kevin McKee of Davenport recently finished competing in the Beijing 2020 Paralympics, where he won a gold medal in sled hockey. Kevin has proudly represented the United States for over a decade, winning gold medals in the last three Paralympics.

Kevin has always had a passion for sports, playing tennis in high school and wheelchair basketball in college. However, Kevin soon realized his passion for sled hockey in 2020 when he started playing on the sled hockey club team with the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago.

Beginning in 1960, the Paralympic Games are held every 4 years and feature a wide range of athletes with different physical abilities, including impaired muscle power, impaired passive range of motion, limb deficiency, leg length difference, hypertonia, ataxia, athetosis, vision impairment, and intellectual impairment. The

Paralympics are held almost immediately following the respective Summer and Winter Olympic Games.

Paralympians like Kevin show all of us that with hard work, dedication, and the drive to succeed, anything is possible.

Congratulations, Kevin, on an outstanding performance. I look forward to cheering you on in the future.

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, I notice the skill and adroitness of Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS making her way hurriedly around the rows, through the rows. She must have picked up something from such a great sled hockey player.

Madam Speaker, I want to turn my attention to some recent criticisms of an amazing man. I agree with some who have clerked at the Supreme Court, that Justice Clarence Thomas may be easily the most intelligent Justice on the Court. That fact actually turned him from his days at Yale Law School—actually he started at Harvard for, I think, a day or so, but he felt like Harvard was too conservative, so he dropped out and applied to Yale and was pleased it seemed more liberal in its thinking.

□ 1315

But Yale was able to take a brilliant person like that, and according to his book, he began to notice how liberals who were White seemed to look down on him with an arrogant view of Clarence Thomas that, gee, if it weren't for us liberals, a Black man like Clarence Thomas would not have even gotten into this school, when actually he had the raw intelligence to do that regardless and had done well everywhere he had been, including Holy Cross when he originally went there thinking he might be a priest at some point. Those are my recollections from his autobiography, a splendid read, "My Grandfather's Son."

That kind of arrogance, looking down on him like he couldn't do this on his own if it weren't for us liberals, turned him off. That, along with other issues, drove him to become quite conservative.

The clarity with which he sees issues is a real treasure for the U.S. Supreme Court.

Now, just as when he was nominated to the Supreme Court, he has come under grave attacks from these same liberals that used to look down on him when he was a liberal, thinking he couldn't possibly be as smart as they were when, actually, he exceeded their level of intelligence.

That was what was called a soft form of discrimination. What he experienced in the hearings for his confirmation and since he has been on the U.S. Supreme Court, clearly, has not been soft discrimination. It has been overt, radical, mean-spirited, evil discrimination. Nothing soft about it. How dare that man come off the plantation and dare to have any point of view that was not provided to him by other liberals?

The man thinks for himself, and he is brilliant.

These same liberals that are now coming after him seek not only to discriminate against him because he is a Black conservative who is brilliant, but they also want to assert a marriage penalty against him because his wife also thinks for herself.

Now, there is a great article written by Mark Paoletta, and this is dated March 11. I won't go through the whole article, but he says: "D.C. Circuit Judge Nina Pillard, for example, voted not to rehear a case rejecting President Trump's refusal to produce his tax returns in response to a congressional subpoena. That was exactly what her husband, the ACLU's litigation director, advocated in an article reviewing the lower court decision."

Now, Justice Thomas is being told he needs to recuse himself because he has a wife who thinks for herself. We can't have that, these liberals say. Yet, the hypocrisy rises higher and higher with every comment they make about Justice Thomas and/or his wife.

"Ninth Circuit Judge Stephen Reinhardt, a liberal icon, participated in a case even after his wife, the chief of an ACLU chapter, commented on the lower court opinion. Her ACLU chapter even submitted a brief to the district court. Reinhardt defended his decision not to recuse, writing his wife's 'views are hers, not mine, and I do not in any way condition my opinions on the positions she takes regarding any issues,' even though he took the same position that his wife took."

The article said: "Ethics experts defended Reinhardt's decision, noting that 'Judge Reinhardt is not presumed to be the reservoir and carrier of his wife's beliefs. . . . A contrary outcome would deem a judge's spouse unable to hold most any position of advocacy, creating what amounts to a marriage penalty.'"

Exactly. And liberals will not apply that standard to liberals, yet they come after Justice Thomas with their fangs bared, viciously attacking him and his wife.

What happened to the old ideas of liberals being these caring, compassionate people who would never judge one's spouse by the acts or thoughts of the other? Well, those have gone by the wayside, and we see exactly what is at play here.

The article says: "The Supreme Court has long rejected this 'marriage penalty.'"

Further down, it says: "While any lower court can substitute a recused judge with another judge, there is no one to replace a Supreme Court Justice who recuses."

We lost my constitutional law professor in the last year, David Guinn. He was a tough professor but a great teacher. He continued to be an incredible resource up to the end of his life. He used to say there is only one court that owes its existence wholly to the U.S. Constitution. Of course, that is

the U.S. Supreme Court. All other courts, as he would say, rely completely on the auspices of the Congress for their existence, for their continued existence, and for their jurisdiction.

It is interesting to look at this, and it is a great point that is being made by some scholars. Since the Supreme Court is set up as a separate branch, that is actually the one that Congress does not have authority to set up rules for recusal, for the Supreme Court.

In this article, Mr. Paoletta says: "Consistent with the Court's policy, even though Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's husband, Marty Ginsburg, practiced law at a firm that represented parties before the Supreme Court, Justice Ginsburg never recused herself. Law professor Jane Ginsburg, the Justice's daughter, wrote an article about a case pending before the Supreme Court. The petitioner cited Jane's article in its brief, and Justice Ginsburg voted for the result advocated by her daughter."

"Marty Ginsburg solved a complex tax problem for his client, Ross Perot's company EDS, and Perot endowed a chair named after Marty Ginsburg at Georgetown University Law Center. When Perot and EDS appeared several times before the Supreme Court, Justice Ginsburg did not recuse. Nor was she required to."

I would add, nor did any of these people attacking the Black conservative, Justice Thomas, bother to advocate their new position back then.

"If reporters mean to tighten recusal standards, they should prepare to levy a marriage penalty on all judges' spouses, not just the Thomases."

"But the press now singles out Justice Thomas, calling on him to recuse because of his wife's activities. Ginna Thomas is a longtime conservative activist who works with groups that take public positions on issues and sometimes even file amicus briefs at the Supreme Court. But unlike the spouses and children of other judges, Ginna does not practice law, much less write briefs. She merely builds conservative coalitions to pursue shared political aims. None of her activities require Justice Thomas to recuse."

"Even so, the press criticized Ginna Thomas for honoring conservative leaders at an awards luncheon because those individuals subsequently filed amicus briefs at the Supreme Court. Historically, this has not required recusal. Ginsburg once donated an autographed copy of her VMI opinion to the pro-abortion NOW Political Action Committee, which auctioned off the opinion at a fundraiser in 1997. Moreover, in 2004, she spoke at a lecture named after herself for the NOW Legal Defense Fund"—that is, the National Organization for Women—"on whose board she served in the 1970s. Two weeks before that lecture, Justice Ginsburg voted in favor of a position advocated by the NOW Legal Defense Fund in an amicus brief."

"None of those activities required Ginsburg to recuse, but the press has

attacked Thomas for stoking concerns of a hyperpartisan court by attending conservative events. Thomas' critics conveniently ignore the numerous instances of liberal Justices attending similar events, such as Justice Sotomayor giving speeches to the liberal American Constitution Society.

"These recent stories have also ignored Justice Ginsburg's partisan attack on Donald Trump during the 2016 Presidential campaign. The Justice called him 'a faker' and criticized him for not disclosing his tax returns. She even voiced concerns about Trump being President. The day after he was elected, Ginsburg again objected by wearing a collar that traditionally signaled she would be dissenting in a case, though there were no cases handed down that day. Yet, she sat on a case challenging a congressional subpoena for President Trump's tax returns, and she decided plenty of other cases involving President Trump and his administration. No one talked of impeaching Justice Ginsburg for her conduct.

"The media are weaponizing baseless ethics charges to smear a conservative Black Justice. Thomas infuriates them because he expresses views they consider unacceptable for a Black man to hold, and because an increasing number of Justices are aligned with those views and may be ready to issue rulings that undercut longstanding liberal precedents. But going after his wife is despicable. And it won't work."

It is also interesting that the majority in H.R. 1 attempts to go after—without naming Justice Thomas, it requires the Judicial Conference of the United States, which is chaired by the Chief Justice, to establish a mandatory code of conduct for the Justices of the U.S. Supreme Court. This is potentially unconstitutional. This is according to testimony before Congress by Hans von Spakovsky.

He makes a good point: "Article III states that the 'judicial power of the United States shall be vested in one supreme court and in such inferior courts as Congress may from time to time ordain and establish. . . . The Constitution, not Congress, created the Supreme Court. It is an independent, co-equal branch. In the same way that the Justices cannot dictate what ethics rules apply to Members of Congress or the President, it is highly questionable whether Congress can dictate the ethics rules that apply to the Supreme Court."

□ 1330

Since the Judicial Conference was established by Congress, "for the benefit of the courts it had created," and "is an instrument for the management of the lower Federal courts, its committees have no mandate to prescribe rules or standards for any other body."

According to the Chief Justice, Justices use the current code of conduct for the lower courts as guidance as well as "a wide variety of other authorities to resolve specific ethics' issues."

The Supreme Court has "never addressed whether Congress may impose those requirements on the Supreme Court." But a serious constitutional problem under Article III with Congress trying to impose such mandates on the Justices, although they comply with the current provisions voluntarily.

So very good points, but just interesting how selective things have gotten.

Now, most judges and most judicial standards will indicate that if a Justice has spoken out and taken a position on a case that has come or is before the Court, it indicates an opinion before the case has concluded that that Justice should be recused. But we know two of the Supreme Court Justices actually appeared, performed same-sex weddings before they came out with their opinion. So that certainly seems to raise questions that people attacking Justice Thomas never actually raised back during those days.

It was interesting to be in here and hear the colloquy between the majority leader and the minority whip and hear the majority leader go back to the allegations raised by President Biden about all these leases that are not being utilized for drilling. Quite interesting, because there are some very legitimate reasons about why they are not utilized. And one of the things that has done tremendous damage to investment in additional wells, one thing, there has been encouragement for banks to look the other way. Do not get involved in fossil fuel development, which is rather interesting; could lead to our own demise as a Republic when we have been the most blessed country when it comes to natural resources of any country of which I am aware.

Our world is jealous. And yet, we routinely put off-limits those very resources we desperately need, even though we produce them more cleanly for the environment than any other country that we are buying them from, particularly China, Russia, others that have gotten control—some in Africa.

But one article here by Peter Hasson about "Biden's Misleading Spin About Oil Production Under Him vs. Trump." "But the White House's framing omits a key fact: while domestic oil production in 2021 was higher than it was in 2017, it was lower than it was in 2018, 2019, and 2020, Federal statistics show."

And the significant reason for that is that drilling doesn't occur overnight. Production doesn't occur overnight. It is a work in progress. So that one President, when he comes into office, actually inherits the preparation to drill or the killing of drilling by the prior President.

So when President Trump took office, his first year, the drilling and production numbers were a result of what had happened before he took office. And thus, when President Biden takes credit for production numbers in his first year, of course, he doesn't want to acknowledge it, but those were the re-

sults of actions taken during the Trump administration. But after that, he does deserve to get credit for the damage or the good that is done.

An article by Thomas Barrabi and Ariel Zilber points that, "If President Joe Biden came out forcefully on the side of increasing U.S. oil production, the price of a barrel could fall quickly, experts told The Post—even if it takes a while to bring that new energy online. Just looked at what happened Wednesday"—this article is from March 9—"in the wake of the United Arab Emirates and Iraq saying they'd up production by an estimated 800,000 barrels a day: The global price of oil dropped by \$22 a barrel within minutes.

"If Biden signaled full-throated support for U.S. drillers to get to work—and perhaps allowed the restarting of the Keystone XL pipeline from Canada—global oil prices could similarly fall sharply, the industry experts told The Post."

And I have noticed that when there is good news about the production of oil or natural gas, that the price doesn't fall quite as quickly as it goes up after bad news, but it should be noted that after years of not replacing oil in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve of oil, the SPR, President Trump not only saw to it that America became energy independent for the first time in decades, but they started putting oil in that Strategic Petroleum Reserve, so that in the event of an emergency, we would have oil to keep going.

It was not put there for a President that has done damage to our ability to produce what we need, to try to get out from under the criticisms from people that can't afford where he has driven the price of energy. And in fact, I would humbly submit that by President Biden's starting to take a million barrels of oil per day from that Strategic Petroleum Reserve, he is setting America up for a catastrophe. Because there are interruptions in the production of oil and natural gas. They come time to time, and especially when there is war activity.

Now, President Biden used a claim that there is a wartime emergency. Yet, under our Constitution, only the U.S. Congress has the authority to declare war, and no such war has been declared. And in fact, President Biden has made very clear, we are not putting troops in Ukraine.

And I was hearing on the news today that actually things that were announced by this administration that would be helping Ukraine fight off Russia have not arrived. There were announcements, but the help that was supposed to be coming from the United States has not come that will help them fight off Russia.

So we can hear all the grand pronouncements about how evil Putin is. But at times, they are just that. They are pronouncements.

Because we are not giving the help to Ukraine that is being promised. Is this some kind of show without putting actions behind it? A lot of Ukrainians

think so when they look at the Biden administration. Because they are desperate. They are fighting with all they have.

I heard the majority leader casting aspersions at Republicans thinking Putin is some great guy. He is a thug.

And yet, who was it that put back in Putin's head that the United States has no problem with him attacking innocent countries and invading innocent countries? Well, we can go back in the second half of the Bush administration, George W. Bush administration, when President Bush and Secretary Condoleezza Rice got upset, as many of us did, when Putin's Russia invaded the country of Georgia. And he slapped some very serious sanctions on Russia to try to send a message: Don't go invading other countries.

So when Biden became Vice President, Obama became President, one of the first things they did, they sent a Secretary of State named Clinton with a red plastic button that they misnamed in Russian. They meant to call it a reset button. But the people working for the Obama/Biden administration and for Secretary Clinton were not smart enough to properly translate the word, so it didn't mean reset.

But they went over there with the intention of sending a message that President Bush, he overreacted when you attacked Georgia. And the message from Obama, Biden, Clinton was, We won't overreact like that when you invade countries you shouldn't. We won't. We don't have a problem with it. That was Bush. That was Condoleezza Rice. They had a problem with your invading Georgia, but we don't have a problem like that.

What was Putin supposed to think? Exactly what he thought.

Number one, this Biden, Obama, Clinton, they are weak people. And they are giving me a green light to invade Crimea, which he did. And what happened? Nothing. The Obama/Biden administration sent blankets over there. It is hard to stop a tank with a blanket; that is what was sent.

But Putin got that message. And then Trump comes in. And he can say flattering things about Putin, but he knew that Putin is not stupid, and he knew that he could be vicious, and he made very clear, you don't invade under my administration, or you will pay a big price. But once President Trump was gone, and we got back to the old policies of the Obama/Biden administration, Putin knew he had a President that he could push around. And that was accented when President Biden telegraphed that we could be okay with a minor incursion. If it is just a small invasion, we probably wouldn't even react. That was the message that was heard in Russia.

And at times, it is almost as if there are people in this administration that have been paid off by Russia.

□ 1345

Well, I guess some people in the Biden family have been paid off, but

that is another matter. At times, though, it does seem like with the change in policy of standing firmly against China's devastating activity when it comes to stealing our secrets, patents, and copyrights, and the lack of action by this administration, it does seem like, gee, it makes you wonder if somebody is getting paid off in this administration. Then you realize, oh, yeah, the Biden family has made a lot of money from China.

People want to talk about maybe Clarence Thomas should recuse himself, I wish they would apply those standards to people who benefit in this administration from the failure to stop China.

In any event, just mark my words, this administration, President Biden, releasing a million barrels of oil a day from our strategic petroleum reserve is really going to come back to hurt us. When we are in an emergency situation and we need that oil, it is not going to be there because President Biden was hoping he could ameliorate some of the anger of voters by the prices that we are seeing at the gas pump and the prices we are seeing in inflation.

That is the thing, when energy prices go up, it affects every price; because food, the things we use to stay warm or to house ourselves, even electric cars cannot be produced without the use of fossil fuel—can't—they will some day, but they can't right now. You got to have fossil fuel or you cannot make a car; not for production, not cheap enough to be bought by the American public.

Since I have been here in Congress, I filed a bill to have a huge cash prize to anyone who could develop the type of battery, capacitor, some way to hold megawattage of electricity for at least 30 days without significant loss. One of these days somebody is going to come up with that, an ability to hold electric. When that happens, we won't need fossil fuel at all. Whoever comes up with a way to do that is going to be mega wealthy.

Once we have that ability, we should be able to capture lightning. There are all kinds of ways we can have energy. I have been told, oh, no, we already can capture energy because some place they have water in a lower reservoir and during off-peak time they pump the water up to a higher reservoir so that during peak times they have the water flow down and that turns turbines and that produces electricity. That is storing energy, but it is not storing electricity.

That energy has to then be converted back into electricity by turning the turbines. Some day we are going to have the ability to have energy held in massive quantities, but right now we don't have that ability.

The batteries that are being used in vehicles, we are heading for all kinds of headaches when enough people buy electric vehicles and we have to do something with all of those toxic batteries. It is going to be bad. It is going

to be horrendous for the environment if too many people start buying electric vehicles.

There is a great article by Kevin O'Scannlain in March of this year titled "The Red-Herring of Unused Leases," which is what the majority leader brought up. It says: "The fact is, natural gas and oil companies hold numbers of 'nonproducing' leases—which is far different from the claim of 'unused' leases mentioned by the White House," and by our majority leader.

Here are some key numbers: 1,548, that is the number of nonproducing offshore leases, according to the Federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management; 13,000, that is the approximate number of nonproducing onshore leases, according to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management:

"Context: 'Nonproducing' means exactly that. These are leases that have not yet been developed to the point of actual production—the average time from onshore lease sale to production is 3 to 4 years; 7 to 10 years for offshore leases—and those that have not produced commercial volumes of oil and gas."

"Polling released last week shows that Americans know the stakes involved overseas and at home. They overwhelmingly support—by a 90 percent margin—increased U.S. production over reliance on foreign energy. That means lawmakers and regulators need to address that."

"The first, by some members of the Biden administration, including White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki on Thursday, is that American oil and natural gas producers are sitting on hundreds of unused Federal leases and do not need access to more. The second, by some industry opponents, is that ramping up U.S. production will not help the Ukrainian people today."

"Psaki has made the claim about 'unused' Federal leases before. It has become a line at the White House pivots to when pressed to explain why it isn't doing more to support American oil and gas production—with soaring demand putting upward pressure on prices and with much of Europe at the mercy of its top energy provider, Russia."

Here are key facts about Federal leases:

"The law already requires companies to either produce oil and/or gas on leases or return the leases to the government—the so-called 'use it or lose it' provision. . . ." It is already in there. Generally, it is required in the first 10 years.

"When a company acquires a lease, it makes a significant financial investment at the beginning of the lease in the form of a nonrefundable bonus bid and pays additional rent until and unless it begins producing."

"For Federal onshore, the Mineral Leasing Act prevents any one company from locking up unproductive excessive Federal acreage."

“Developing a lease takes years and substantial effort to determine whether the underlying geology holds commercial quantities of oil and gas. The lengthy process to develop them from a lease is often extended by administrative and legal challenges at every step along the way.”

Every company is familiar with lawfare, going to court, being drug repeatedly into court to stop the use of a lease.

“The argument about ‘unused’ leases is a red-herring, a smokescreen for energy policies that have had a hamstringing effect on the world’s leading producer of natural gas and oil. It suggests American producers have been motivated by desire to manipulate the market during the current crisis in Europe. This is false. American oil and gas producers are able and willing to do their part to support American energy leadership, including providing energy that can help allies abroad.

“Ultimately, energy policies affect the energy investment climate. Specifically, they impact the ability of producers—typically accountable to shareholders—to take the risks involved in spending billions of dollars to find and develop oil and gas. Mischaracterizing the way Federal leases work does not help foster new investment and risk-taking.”

“The time for helping Ukraine with American energy was months ago. Then, the Biden administration support for robust U.S. production might have helped deter Moscow from thinking that European nations were so dependent on Russian energy might do less to oppose Russia the aggressor.

“Instead, the administration discouraged American energy. For more than a year it has halted new Federal leasing—key to future energy investment and production. It canceled energy infrastructure, blocked development in parts of Alaska, entertained new taxes to punish the U.S. energy industry and chilled future investment by signaling that oil and gas would not be part of America’s future energy mix. All last summer, the administration called on OPEC+, the oil cartel, to increase its production more rapidly in the face of rising energy costs, bypassing the American producers.”

Let me go back and readdress ANWR. We lost Don Young. We had a wonderful service and tribute to him. It was a great funeral, a great service for a great man. I got to sit beside Don Young for years in the Natural Resources Committee because I became the second most senior person on Natural Resources. Since I made Republican leaders mad, they were not going to allow me to be chairman, and we sit by seniority, so I sat by Don Young for years.

Don would get so upset when people would pretend to speak for Tribal groups in Alaska or for the Alaskan people, and say, they don’t want ANWR—well, there was one little Tribe

that didn’t, but the rest sure did. He would take Members of Congress on trips to ANWR. So much of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, that area that was designated by the Carter administration, it is beautiful, it is pristine, there is wildlife in abundance.

Don always wanted to make sure that anybody that would listen and cared to know the truth could see for themselves in Alaska—here is this massive wildlife area that has been set apart by Congress. Well, here is this little bitty area comparatively where the Carter administration said: You know what, there is nothing there. Nothing can live there. This is a great spot, and we will allow drilling here. For decades, drilling was not allowed in the one place that it would have been okay to have drilling.

When the Trump administration says, hey, there was a designated place. And despite commercials where you see all this wonderful wildlife, that is not in the part designated for drilling. All the beautiful mountains and all, that is not the part designated by President Carter for drilling. It would bless the heck out of Alaska and their people because of the revenue it would bring.

It would be a blessing for America to further be independent and to further have the ability to encourage countries like Ukraine, and to discourage countries like Russia from picking on them because we have enough of the energy needs, we can fill enough energy needs. They don’t have to worry about begging a ruthless dictator, like Putin has become.

Yet, year after year we have had people trying to stop it, and then once Biden was sworn in as President he did the same thing. No, we are going to put that back off limit. It is really a shame.

This article says: “The current situation is a reminder that American energy abundance requires foresight and planning, investment and policy support. This is the path to sound energy policy that keeps America safe and strong and allows American energy to support allies.”

I am hoping—since I am not going to be in the next Congress—I am hoping that the bill I filed years ago that would provide a big cash prize to whoever comes up with the method of storing massive amounts of electricity for long periods of time efficiently, I am hoping that that won’t be so futuristic that we couldn’t have a majority actually pass that.

□ 1400

Because once we do that, there is no need for fossil fuels. We will have all the energy we need, and you could even produce cars. Let’s face it, natural gas is such an important feedstock for so many of the products we use every day that we have come to rely on as necessities, as essential, including things in vehicles themselves.

In fact, in Texas, our air and water have been getting cleaner year by year.

A lot of that is due to moving from oil and coal into natural gas; much cleaner.

In fact, here are some oil and gas facts:

In March of 2020, before the lockdowns began, the United States reached its highest level of energy production by January 2021. For the first time in nearly 50 years, U.S. was producing more oil than we were consuming. In just over a year, we have seen a 4 percent surplus of domestic oil and gas production fall to a 4 percent oil and gas deficit.

President Biden directed the Secretary of the Interior to halt new oil and gas leases on public lands and waters. President Biden canceled the Keystone XL pipeline which would have transported 830,000 barrels of oil per day from Alberta to refineries on the Gulf Coast of Texas.

The Biden administration has created significant regulatory uncertainty by threatening new and excessive burdensome regulations on the oil and gas industry, including the EPA methane rule and the DOI waste prevention rule.

The Biden administration has rescinded Trump administration permitting improvements, including the NEPA reforms, the WOTUS reforms, and the ESA reforms.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has failed to approve natural gas pipeline applications leading to a backlog of pending applications that discourage economic growth and new energy development.

The U.S. Department of the Interior scrapped the Trump administration decision that authorized expanded leasing and development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska.

The price of gasoline has risen from an average of \$2.38 under President Trump to approximately \$3.53 today. It is a lot higher than that. Today I noticed around \$5 around here.

This is the largest year-over-year price rise in 30 years and leaves little room to absorb the impact of potential massive oil and gas sanctions on Russia.

So those are some facts.

I want to touch on one other matter here. The name of this article is “Republicans expose ‘uncommon’ CDC, teachers’ unions ties on COVID school reopening guidance in report.”

This is from Jessica Chasmar, March 30.

“Republicans accuse Walensky of downplaying the degree to which the CDC departed from past practice to allow AFT to affect the policymaking process.”

“Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, official’s testimony claiming that the agency coordinated with teachers’ unions at an extraordinary level in crafting its school reopening guidance, despite the agency’s earlier claims that such coordination was routine and nonpolitical.”

“Republicans wrote that emails between the American Federation of

Teachers, the White House, and the CDC showed that the AFT's 'cozy relationship with the Biden administration's political leadership at the CDC positioned the union to impose line-by-line edits' to the reopening guidance, despite the CDC's 'past practice to keep draft guidance confidential.'"

So we find out the mental and physical suffering of children due to 2 years of closed schools in some places, we can, again, go back to some of the teachers' unions that helped bring that about.

An article from the Daily Caller by Nicole Silverio, apparently NBC actually edited photos of Lia Thomas to look more like a woman.

That is what Erica Denhoff alleged in the NBC's "Today" show, they photoshopped her work to make transgender swimmer Lia Thomas look more feminine.

And then this has application to January 6, work by the FBI, we still need to get to the bottom, those who committed crimes and harmed the Capitol need to be punished. But those who didn't, so many appear to be sought and persecuted, not just prosecuted.

It has gotten kind of strange.

But Julie Kelly has a March 10 article about the Governor, Gretchen Whitmer, an alleged kidnapping plot, and the trial that was going on about that.

"After it became clear during opening statements that the defense could not argue their case without explaining the deep involvement of the FBI's confidential human sources," so the judge reversed his ruling, "telling the jury that 'it won't be possible to draw a line between the government proving their case and entrapment.'"

"One FBI official told his supervisor he planned to conduct a 'terrorism enterprise investigation' into the loose band of misfits with no solid plans, much less the ability, to do anything nefarious at the time. The alleged ring-leader, Adam Fox, lived in the ramshackle basement of a vacuum repair shop with his two dogs; if he needed to go to the bathroom or brush his teeth, Fox had to use the facilities at the Mexican restaurant next door."

"Secret gatherings and out-of-town excursions, courtesy of the FBI and U.S. taxpayers, animated the scheme."

Then she goes on to explain the extent to which the FBI and U.S. taxpayers paid to have meetings to try to bring the conspiracy to kidnap Governor Whitmer into actually going forward.

It really is shocking and does raise a serious question: When you have a dozen or so FBI informants or employed people, many getting paid in cash and benefits of tens of thousands of dollars, is it a plot then by the FBI or is it really a plot by the people who hadn't had the ability without the FBI to do anything about it?

So it is a sad time when the FBI seems to be using taxpayer resources to create events that would not happen without their involvement.

So there is a lot of oversight that needs to be done and a lot of housecleaning that needs to be done. It doesn't look like that will be happening any time soon.

I am grateful that we are again beginning to see some of our friends across the aisle getting back to basics and concern about civil rights that have been abused by government entities.

We have got a lot of work to do, and I hope that we will at least come together in stopping the Federal Government from being the source from which criminal plots are made available and potentially real.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Madam Speaker, I have to make a plane, so I won't be here for the whole 30 minutes. It will be probably more like 15 minutes.

Before addressing the issues I wanted to talk about today, I want to one more time talk a little bit about vitamin D, because earlier today I talked to Dr. Amiez Dror from Israel about a study that he conducted.

The study is absolutely amazing. In Israel about 45 percent of the population is vitamin D deficient, and that is really deficient. By deficient, they mean less than 20 nanograms per milliliter. About 75 percent of the Israeli population has vitamin D less than 30 milligrams per nanoliter.

In any event, it wasn't a huge study, but he looked to see how people who had adequate levels of vitamin D performed once they came into the medical system compared to people who were under that 20 nanograms. He found people who were vitamin D deficient, which is almost half the Israeli population, were 14 times more likely to have severe or critical COVID than the people who were above 20 nanograms per milliliter.

As far as people who died, 25 percent of the people who were hospitalized and were vitamin D deficient died compared to only 2.3 percent of those who had adequate vitamin D.

Think about that. You are 11 times more likely to die, Madam Speaker, if you are vitamin D deficient.

When he looked at adequate prelevel hospitalization for vitamin D, it was a better predictor of how you would turn out than having COPD, having diabetes, or having congestive heart failure. Unbelievable what a great predictor it was.

Nevertheless, continued our kind of asleep public health establishment has still not talked about this like they could have. We recently went over 1 million deaths in the United States attributed to COVID, but we can't talk

about the fact that—and he is not the only doctor who feels that way—you could have cut that number in half or maybe well time more than half, if out of the chute well before we had such things as vaccines, we knew about vitamin D being good for people back in April or May of 2020.

If they had spent some of these advertising dollars they spent on other things en masse or whatever, they could have, I believe, saved half the lives. I right now personally know nine people who have died of COVID, and I can't help but think how many of these people or which of those people would have survived if they had publicized the importance of taking vitamin D.

Now, of course, I also asked the doctor how much vitamin D you should take. He felt for people in good shape it would be 2,000 to 3,000 international units.

If you are overweight, because the fat cells absorb the vitamin D, you should take more, maybe 4,000 or more international units.

He points out that even if you are in the sun, one of the things that creates so many people in Israel to be vitamin D deficient is—as the United States—so many people take sunscreen. It is important to protect yourself from skin cancer, but you have to remember, if you are one of these people who put sunscreen all over yourself, even in a sunny climate, you are not going to get adequate vitamin D levels.

He is a very important doctor. He has a Ph.D. in genetics. He is also a medical doctor. He also has degrees in molecular biology. So you are talking about a real sharp guy here.

If we had an on-the-ball press corps paying attention today, they should give him a call in Israel. He loves to talk to people about this, and you could get something that is very important in your local newspapers.

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If anybody connected to the public health establishment is hearing this speech, they should give my office a call. We will give them the contact information.

It would have been better if this sort of stuff were out there 2 years ago, but the COVID infection rate goes up and down. We are on a downswing right now, though we are not as low as we were last July.

Vitamin D helps prevent other diseases as well. I realize a lot of the medical establishment in the United States does not like to focus on things in which people don't make a lot of money. But for people who want to save lives, there is still time to get the story of vitamin D out there. I certainly think every major and minor newspaper in the United States should be covering it.

He happened to mention that he got something in the New York Post, but it should be in more than just the New York Post.

Right now, we have our President, who I watched a little bit yesterday,